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ABSTRACT

This guide is the fourth in a series of guidelines designed to be a framework for positive action at the school site and in the classroom through the High Schools That Work (HSTW) program, an effort to raise the achievement of career-bound students. It details the process of accomplishing the HSTW's goals through an ongoing staff development program. Discussed first are the HSTW's goals of transforming schools into learning organizations for all students and making teachers key players at HSTW sites. The goals and key practices of the HSTW program are listed, and 10 principles of effective staff development at sites are discussed. The following phases/key activities of an effective staff development program are examined: (1) assessment (ask key questions, compile and analyze data, set priorities and state desired results); (2) design/implementation (use multiple staff development strategies, plan the content, select the process, incorporate key elements of workshop design, identify consultants and trainers, track student achievement and changes in school practices); (3) institutionalization; and (4) evaluation. Finally, the roles and responsibilities of the following individuals/organizations for planning/implementing staff development at HSTW sites are described: district-level leaders and staff, principals, site staff development teams, HSTW site coordinators, and vocational and academic teachers. Sample materials and descriptions of exemplary practices are included throughout the guide. (MN)

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SITE DEVELOPMENT GUIDE #4

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

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Achieving the Goals and Key Practices of the High Schools That Work *Program through Staff Development*

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The *High Schools That Work* program is designed to raise the achievement of career-bound students[1] by combining challenging academic courses with modern vocational studies. *HSTW* is based on the belief that career-bound students can master complex academic and technical concepts if they are expected to, if they are engaged in challenging learning activities, and if they receive extra help and time to meet high performance standards.

The purpose of this guide is to help high schools achieve the goals and key practices of *HSTW* through an ongoing staff development plan that meets the needs of teachers and students. (See Goals and Key Practices on page 2.)

Schools Become Learning Organizations

Staff development for *HSTW* sites is aimed at changing curriculum content and standards; instructional methods; and school organization, beliefs, and understanding as they relate to the preparation of career-bound students. Schools can achieve the *HSTW* vision if they become "learning organizations" in which leaders and teachers engage in continuous study of how to improve the school for all students.

Teachers need meaningful opportunities to meet together to plan, test ideas, support each other, communicate, and reflect on curriculum, instruction, and school conditions. They need opportunities to join, participate in, and contribute to small groups or teams of vocational and academic teachers who analyze site data and grapple with fundamental questions of what teachers and students need to know and do. When such a structure exists, staff development becomes the centerpiece for achieving the *HSTW* goals and key practices.

Teachers Are the Key Players

To help students achieve at a higher level, schools must change what happens in the classroom. Teachers are the key players: Their views on teaching and learning—shaped in large part by staff development—determine what they believe students are capable of doing and the quality of work they assign. Successful *HSTW* sites believe that hard work and effort are the keys to success, regardless of a student's socioeconomic background or previous achievement. The *HSTW* program challenges and assists students in reaching higher levels of competence in academic and occupational studies and gives them a preview of the demands they will encounter in the workplace and further education.

[1] Career-bound high school students are the "other" students, those who plan to work or enroll in a two-year community college or vocational-technical school rather than enter a four-year college or university immediately after high school. They may attend a four-year postsecondary institution in the future.

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SREB-STATE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CONSORTIUM
HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK PROGRAM

Goals

- To increase the mathematics, science, and communication achievement and the application of learning for career-bound students to the national average of all students.
- To integrate the essential content of traditional college preparatory studies—math, science, and language arts—with vocational and technical studies, by creating conditions that support school leaders and teachers in carrying out certain key practices.

Key Practices

- Setting higher expectations and getting career-bound students to meet them;
- Increasing access to challenging vocational studies, with a major emphasis on using high-level math, science, language arts, and problem-solving competencies in the context of modern business and technical studies;
- Increasing access to academic studies that teach the essential concepts from the college preparatory curriculum through functional and applied strategies that enable students to see the relationship between course content and future roles they may envision for themselves;
- Having students complete a challenging and related program of study, including three courses in mathematics and three in science, with at least two credits in each course equivalent in content to courses offered in the college preparatory program, and having students complete at least four courses in a vocational major and two courses in related areas;
- Having an organizational structure and schedule that enable academic and vocational teachers to have the time to plan and deliver an integrated curriculum aimed at teaching high-status academic and technical content;
- Having each student actively engaged in the learning process;
- Involving each student and his/her parent in an individualized advisement system aimed at ensuring that each student completes an accelerated and coherent program of academic study with a vocational or academic major;
- Providing a structured system of extra help to enable career-bound students to complete successfully an accelerated program of study that includes high-level academic content and a major;
- Using student assessment and program evaluation information to check and improve the curriculum, instruction, school climate, organization, and management.
- Providing career-bound students access to a structured system of work-based learning that is planned in collaboration with high-status school-based learning—high school and postsecondary—and that results in an industry-recognized credential and employment in a career pathway.

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT AT *HSTW* SITES

Certain principles undergird effective staff development at *HSTW* sites. They lend integrity to the process and form the basis for planning and conducting activities. The principles are the "rules of conduct" for effective staff development.

Principle 1. Effective staff development is aligned with the vision, goals, and key practices of *HSTW*. Sites making the most progress use staff development to help the school move toward the vision of higher achievement for career-bound students.

Principle 2. Effective staff development is an ongoing process rather than an event. School personnel often think of staff development as a day or days on the school calendar or an event that happens at a particular time and place. In the *HSTW* program, continuous staff development should be woven into all aspects of school life.

Principle 3. Effective staff development focuses on student achievement. The connection between staff development and student learning must be clear to everyone from the beginning. The overriding question is, "How will students benefit from the time, energy, and money invested in this activity?" For example, if the purpose of a staff development activity is to help teachers use contextual learning strategies, the natural tendency is to measure outcomes on the basis of how often and how well teachers use the strategies. The most important outcome, however, is whether students gain a better understanding of the real world and increase their reading, math, science, and occupational skills.

Principle 4. Effective staff development is a coherent sequence of activities aimed at achieving a broad vision of school improvement. Too many staff development activities are isolated events conducted by charismatic speakers on topics unrelated to where the school plans to go. Packaged programs, specific initiatives, and one-time workshops do little to change the school curriculum and organization. Teachers need to see how individual activities connect with a larger vision of school improvement. Each activity moves the school closer to the vision of *HSTW*.

Principle 5. An effective staff development program contributes to a school culture in which all teachers continue to learn how to teach and all teachers believe they have the power to improve student performance. Schools that reach the *HSTW* goals are the ones that value continued improvement. Teachers at those schools believe they can improve the achievement of career-bound students and are encouraged to try new teaching methods. Schools that have the ethos of always struggling to be better are the ones that become good schools for all students.

Principle 6. Effective staff development consists of four phases: 1) assessment, 2) design and implementation, 3) institutionalization, and 4) evaluation. In the assessment phase, school leaders and teachers determine the performance level of career-bound students and the status of school and instructional practices. Identified needs form the basis for staff development design and implementation. Institutionalization refers to integrating the *HSTW* goals and key practices schoolwide. Finally, evaluation reveals whether the staff development activities are effective in improving school and instructional practices.

Principle 7. Workshops, seminars, institutes, courses, and other staff development activities should contain three essential elements: 1) development of theoretical understanding, 2) demonstrations of good instructional strategies, and 3) initial practice. Teachers need to know the conceptual base of new practices and what to expect if those techniques are used appropriately. They need to see numerous demonstrations before mastering a skill, and they need to practice the skill during the staff development activity and in the classroom.

Principle 8. Good staff development activities include follow-through to help school leaders and teachers implement new practices in the school and classroom. If nothing happens after formal training, fewer than 10 percent of participants will use new skills to benefit students. Planned peer support and sharing can boost implementation of a desired practice. Follow-through training—planned at the beginning rather than as an afterthought—may be necessary. If sufficient follow-through is not provided, the funds spent on staff development activities may have been wasted.

Principle 9. Effective staff development activities are based on a thorough understanding of student achievement data and students' perceptions of their high school experiences. School leaders and teachers need training in gathering, interpreting, and using this data to improve school practice. School leaders and teachers who collect and "make sense of" student and teacher information make progress in implementing practices to improve the achievement of career-bound students. To justify the investment of time, energy, and money, any new learning should be based on research, relate to the needs of the participants, and be user-friendly.

Principle 10. Effective staff development depends on adequate resources—including time to learn—to achieve intended results. Site leaders need to allocate funds in the beginning to ensure that staff development becomes a part of the school routine. Resources are needed for trainers, instructional and support materials, time for teachers to learn and use new skills, and opportunities for teachers to observe their peers. Teachers need time to engage in significant week-in and week-out activities, including seminars and workshops, cooperative planning and study groups, technical assistance and coaching, content-area research, and reflection on instructional methods. One way to find time is to rethink the school day, week, and year.

FINDING TIME FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Finding time for staff development is a constant challenge. Consider these possibilities:

- **Borrowed Time**—Add a few minutes to each school day so that a partial day becomes available for teachers to plan together.
- **Common Time**—Re-schedule the entire day so several teachers will have the same free period.
- **Freed-up Time**—Student teachers, parents, community members, or administrators can perform teacher tasks or conduct classes to allow teachers to participate in staff development. While teachers meet, students may attend seminars supervised by administrators or teachers. Parents, business and industry leaders, and community representatives can speak to students while their teachers engage in staff development.
- **Better-used Time**—Devote at least half of the school's regularly scheduled faculty meetings to staff development and planning rather than routine announcements or administrative details. Include hands-on learning, demonstrations, support, and feedback. Faculty meetings can provide time for teachers to meet in formal study groups to address curriculum, instruction, and interdisciplinary teamwork.
- **New Time**—Teachers can participate in staff development during a series of dinner meetings, a weekend retreat in an informal setting, or summer institutes on specific topics.
- **Re-scheduled Time**—Revise the school calendar to provide more staff development days. Some high schools include up to 10 extra days in a 190-day school year for staff development. Allocate a portion of staff development time for the entire faculty and a portion to individual or sub-group activities.

One way to re-schedule time is to create a district-level "academy" or "institute" for staff development in a specific content area. An academy is not so much a physical location as it is a group of trainers—usually from the district—who plan and present together. Presenters may go to a school, or groups of teachers from one or more schools may go to a central location for the staff development activity. Another approach is to conduct a summer school academy during which teachers teach in the morning and debrief in the afternoon. Two teachers lead each group—one to teach and one to observe and give feedback.

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PLANNING AN EFFECTIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Effective staff development has four phases: 1) assessment; 2) design and implementation; 3) institutionalization; and 4) evaluation. Trainers and teachers need to ensure that the staff development plan is goal-focused, ongoing, site-specific, and effective. In each phase, they should ask, "Will this work in our school?" They should also consider what they need from school leaders and teachers and the district office to make the program work.

Assessment

In the assessment phase, school leaders and teachers—in collaboration with community partners—decide on a plan of action. Discussions should focus on a vision of what the school can become if teachers expect more of career-bound students and use curricula and teaching methods that actively involve students in the learning process.

Key Questions to Ask in the Assessment Phase

- Do teachers and school leaders understand the need for change? Are they aware of gaps between the current and desired performance of career-bound students?
- Do teachers and administrators share the *HSTW* goal of helping career-bound students master the essential content of college preparatory mathematics, science, and language arts courses?
- Do teachers and school leaders understand that the plan for achieving *HSTW* goals and key practices is evolutionary rather than pre-packaged?
- Will leaders and teachers in the district and school speak in favor of making changes to achieve *HSTW* goals?
- Do all administrators and teachers know the intended results of staff development activities?

Compile and Analyze Data

Since the *HSTW* goal is to raise the achievement of career-bound students to the national average of all students, all staff development efforts focus on that goal. Data analysis concentrates on the improvement needed to raise the achievement of career-bound students in reading, writing, math, and science. This step also focuses on needed changes in the curriculum, instructional practices, and guidance system.

Set Priorities and State Desired Results

When examining gaps between "what is" and "what is desired" in student achievement and school practices, the staff development team should identify possible causes for the gaps. The reasons may include:

- The school and teachers expect too little of career-bound students;
- Many academic and vocational teachers do not believe it is important to motivate career-bound

SREB COMPILES DATA TO HELP SCHOOLS PLAN STAFF DEVELOPMENT

SREB compiles data from *High Schools That Work* sites on student achievement in mathematics, science, and reading; student opinions of their high school experiences; transcript analysis; and student retrospectives one year after graduation. Results are sent to sites to help in planning staff development activities and instructional changes. (See *Site Development Guide #3: Needs Assessment*, or contact SREB for information on each data source.)

The SREB Teacher Survey is completed by academic and vocational teachers at each *HSTW* site. The survey report contains information on teacher participation in the *HSTW* program and gives insights into their staff development needs and preferences. Each *HSTW* site receives a summary report. (See pages 6 and 7 of this guide for a summary of 1993 Teacher Survey results from all participating sites.)

HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK TEACHER SURVEY HELPS SITES IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS STAFF DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

In April 1993, the Southern Regional Education Board initiated a survey that was completed by 5,418 academic and vocational teachers at 154 *High Schools That Work* sites. Teachers responded to questions on:

- School and teacher attitudes toward career-bound students;
- Preparation of those students;
- Staff development to help teachers improve their teaching of higher level content to those students.

Each *HSTW* site that participated in the survey received a report for use in planning and implementing improvements in what is expected of career-bound students and what and how they are taught. Many of the responses have implications for staff development. For example, the composite findings from all participating sites revealed that:

- **Academic and vocational teachers need help in expecting more of career-bound students.** Most teachers believe in the importance of getting students to put forth the effort to master complex content, yet many teachers do not believe that career-bound students can achieve at a higher level and do not use instructional strategies to assist them in making greater strides in college prep math, science, and language arts. Schools that do not see the potential of career-bound students allow them to enroll in lower-level academic courses. Many vocational teachers are reluctant to recommend all of their students to employers as "highly competent." Staff development can focus on creating higher expectations for career-bound students, upgrading the curriculum, and using instructional methods to help them succeed.
- **Teachers need to perceive that the whole school is united in raising the achievement of career-bound students.** Teachers need the support of the administration and other teachers in helping all students master essential content from college prep math, science, and language arts. Staff development can help unite teachers and school leaders in supporting high standards and expectations for career-bound students.
- **Teachers and administrators need to develop a climate of constant improvement.** The school must have clear goals and priorities and must evaluate its programs and activities regularly. It should encourage teachers to use a variety of methods to raise the achievement of career-bound students. Staff development can bring teachers together to review and analyze student and teacher data and to examine reports on the school's progress. Those meetings will generate new ideas for improvement.
- **Teachers need help in the way they teach career-bound students: integrating academic and vocational curricula, using applied learning strategies in academic classes, incorporating academic content into vocational courses, and actively engaging students in the learning process.** Staff development that exposes teachers to new methods should include the rationale for the changes, modeling of the techniques, and opportunities to practice during staff development and in the classroom.
- **Academic and vocational teachers need to meet and plan together to help career-bound students see connections between academic and occupational studies.** Integration of academic and vocational education cannot succeed schoolwide unless teachers know each other, understand each other's curricula, and communicate and coordinate lesson plans. Teachers can also work together to analyze the effectiveness of new strategies. Staff development efforts should include opportunities for teachers to visit other classrooms and to participate in business and industry tours and internships.
- **Teachers and administrators need to enlist parent and community support.** Every career-bound student should have a challenging four-year program of study planned in conjunction with parents, teachers, and counselors. Staff development can prepare teachers to play an active role in advising career-bound

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students about a program of study. Staff development activities can better equip teachers and administrators to work with employers and the community to establish performance benchmarks and to devise strategies to help students meet high standards.

- **Academic and vocational teachers need help in getting career-bound students to work harder to master challenging tasks.** Teachers seldom observe career-bound students exhibiting the kinds of behavior that the workplace requires: the ability to solve complex problems, the ability to write well, a high motivation level, the ability to solve math problems, disciplined work habits, and the capacity to concentrate. Staff development should help teachers learn and use strategies to get students to exhibit behaviors needed in the workplace.

In the SREB survey, teachers expressed a desire for staff development that is personalized and flexible—a departure from the practice of herding a large group of teachers into a session on a certain topic. Teachers said they prefer a variety of staff development activities that meet the specific needs of the school, the students, and themselves. Their preferences include:

- Having common planning time to meet and share ideas with other teachers on how to help career-bound students master complex content;
- Visiting the workplace to see how employees use academic skills in their daily routines;
- Having common planning time to work with a team of academic and vocational teachers to develop an integrated program of study;
- Observing outstanding practices in another classroom or school;
- Attending workshops on raising expectations and getting students to achieve higher standards through extra help, applied learning, and team teaching.

students to make the effort to master complex assignments;

- Most teachers do not believe career-bound students need to master essential content from college prep mathematics, science, and English courses;
- Most academic teachers are unclear about the school's goal for career-bound students;
- Most academic teachers do not know how to use applied instructional methods to teach academic concepts;
- Most vocational teachers do not know how to integrate higher level academic content into their classes;
- The school does not have a guidance system that involves teachers, counselors, parents, and students in planning a challenging program of study.

In deciding how to address needs through staff development, planners should give the highest priority to activities that will do the most to advance the achievement of career-bound students. They should determine the results—curriculum and instructional practices, school climate and organization, student achievement, etc.—that they want to gain. Next, they should decide on indicators that will show that the school and instructional practices and student achievement are attained.

In determining staff development needs, the team asks a number of questions:

- How can we help teachers and school leaders visualize a school based on *HSTW* goals and key practices?
- How can we help the faculty—teachers, counselors, and school leaders—reach consensus that most students can master high-level academic content?

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- What resources are available to support staff development activities?
- How will we prepare academic and vocational teachers to work together in motivating students to master complex learning objectives?
- How will we help teachers understand that what they currently teach and expect of career-bound students is inadequate for the workplace and postsecondary education?
- How will we help teachers add meaning and purpose to the curriculum so that career-bound students see the need for courses such as algebra, geometry, trigonometry, chemistry, physics, and college prep language arts?
- What will help teachers use instructional methods that engage career-bound students in challenging projects?
- How can we help teachers and counselors involve parents of career-bound students in planning their children's high school education?
- How can we help teachers and administrators involve business and industry in designing a curriculum that reflects contemporary workplace trends?

Design and Implementation

The main concern in this phase is to design and conduct staff development activities that help school leaders and teachers acquire new skills. The staff development team devotes a great deal of energy to answering three major questions:

- What does the staff development program contain?
- What are school leaders and teachers expected to do as a result of the staff development?
- What school conditions will facilitate or impede progress toward the desired result?

Multiple Staff Development Strategies

The team will want to consider a number of approaches in meeting the staff development needs of teachers, school leaders, and counselors. A well-designed staff development program encourages individual teachers and groups of teachers to assess their needs in the context of the *HSTW* program so that they can take advantage of district, state, regional, and national staff development activities. A flexible design allows individual teachers to develop their own study plans aimed at improving what and how they teach career-bound students. Individualized activities may include reading books and articles, attending conferences, observing a colleague's class, participating in industry tours or summer internships, taking courses at a college or university, traveling, joining district-level study groups, and taking correspondence courses. The activities may occur at school or other locations in the evening, on weekends, and during the summer.

Individual teachers frequently attend conferences, institutes, and workshops to improve their skills and knowledge. The staff development team should establish professional expectations for teachers and school leaders who participate in off-campus training:

- **Before attending—**
  - Determine the purpose of the activity and how it relates to the *HSTW* key practices;

ANNUAL *HSTW* STAFF DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Teachers and administrators from many *HSTW* sites say the single most valuable staff development activity is the Annual *High Schools That Work* Staff Development Conference each July. Teams of academic and vocational teachers, counselors, and administrators from over 300 *HSTW* sites in 19 states attend the conference. The program includes national keynote speakers, workshops on outstanding practices and new techniques, and mentoring sessions that allow veteran *HSTW* site leaders to share their knowledge and experiences with new sites.

- Set priorities;
- Pair up with a colleague.

- **While there—**
  - Meet the experts;
  - Meet fellow participants;
  - Keep a journal;
  - Visit exhibits.

- **On returning home—**
  - Organize materials and notes;
  - Use the new knowledge as soon as possible;
  - Share the new knowledge with at least four other teachers.

In addition to encouraging school personnel to seek staff development activities that meet their individual needs, the team will want to plan a few activities at the site to address the major needs identified by the team. The goal is to involve as many teachers and school leaders as possible. The team will probably exert considerable effort in planning the content, selecting the best workshop leader, and providing follow-through activities to help teachers and school leaders translate new knowledge and skills into practice.

Plan the Content

The selection of content—what school leaders and teachers are expected to learn how to do—is an important task in designing staff development. Content is based on the needs identified during the assessment phase. The *HSTW* key practices provide a framework for thinking about existing conditions, how they will affect the outcome, and the desired results.

Staff development may focus on: preparing school leaders and teachers to carry out one or more of the *HSTW* key practices, developing new subject area knowledge, acquiring new teaching skills, integrating academic and vocational education, devising a guidance system, improving student career and educational planning, and performing improved classroom management techniques. Staff development at *HSTW* sites should:

- Have the potential to increase student achievement;
- Be based in research and proven in practice;
- Relate to site needs;
- "Make sense" to teachers;
- Have strong advocates at the school and district level;
- Have sufficient materials and resources;
- Have a commitment from school leaders to support new strategies.

Select the Process

In selecting the process for a staff development workshop, planners need to know teachers' opinions about the school climate. An effective staff development process helps teachers and school leaders strengthen one or more conditions:

- Does the entire school share the *HSTW* vision?
- What are the norms for continuous improvement? Do teachers seek and assess strategies available inside and outside the school?
- What value is placed on mutual sharing, assistance, and collaboration?
- What organizations, roles, and policies are in place to encourage collegial efforts to achieve the *HSTW* goals and key practices?

The staff development process helps teachers become adept at linking classroom improvement and increased achievement of career-bound students. Teachers become learners when they work in teams or as an entire faculty to:

- Study the needs of students and teachers, and decide on a route toward improvement;
- Identify the practices that work best in improving student learning;
- Study and adopt new curricular methods, materials, and equipment—including new technology;
- Gather and analyze data and information on the school and its students to define problems and try out solutions;

- Acquire new instructional skills, and push for high levels of implementation.

An effective staff development process provides ongoing opportunities for teachers to share ideas on how to master new teaching strategies. Teachers need time to reflect on how to change methodology, course content, and their expectations of career-bound students.

Elements of Workshop Design

School-based staff development activities should equip teachers to use new skills in the classroom. Workshops have three essential elements:

1. **Development of Theoretical Understanding**—Teachers need to know the conceptual base of new learning and what to expect if they use new techniques appropriately.
2. **Demonstrations of Good Instructional Strategies**—Many demonstrations may be necessary before a teacher masters a complex skill. Demonstrations need to be available at the workshop, in another teacher's classroom, or on videotape.
3. **Initial Practice**—Practice during the workshop gives the trainer an opportunity to observe and plan additional demonstrations.

A major challenge in planning effective staff development is to help teachers transfer new skills to the classroom. A number of follow-through strategies will help ensure that teachers introduce and use new skills:

GOOD PLANNING WILL HELP AVOID "BUMPS" IN THE ROAD

Because of the comprehensive nature of *HSTW*, the staff development team has its work cut out for it. The team can avoid major "bumps" along the way by being aware that:

- ❑ Too much effort on the front end to change beliefs about a strategy or curriculum may drain energy needed for implementation. If teachers see the benefit of new approaches and are encouraged to use them, their belief in the program will increase.
- ❑ Ownership does not occur magically or instantly. Even if people favor change, they may not "own it" in the sense that they understand it or are adept at it. Ownership is a progressive process.
- ❑ Securing and maintaining resources for continuous improvement are ongoing tasks.
- ❑ Even if student achievement increases, there is no guarantee that staff development activities will continue. Power relationships (politics) in schools and districts often rule the day.
- ❑ Student performance may dip in the early stages of implementation. This period of adjustment may discourage staff development leaders and tempt them to return to old ways.
- ❑ As they begin to implement new approaches, teachers may feel inadequate and become impatient for rapid improvement. Constant positive reinforcement is vital.
- ❑ Teachers may feel uncomfortable as they replace ingrained instructional methods.
- ❑ Distractions may threaten to dilute the staff development effort.
- ❑ Staff development leaders may need to exert a great deal of energy to keep the lines of communication open without disrupting school organization and protocol.
- ❑ Leaders will have to find ways to celebrate success without discrediting earlier efforts.
- ❑ Leaders will have to "hold plans loosely" and be flexible enough to respond to unforeseen events.

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TWO GRADUATE COURSES PREPARE TEACHERS AND COUNSELORS TO HELP CAREER-BOUND STUDENTS ACQUIRE SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

In response to public outcry that high schools do not prepare students for the 21st-century workplace, Dorchester School District Two in Summerville, South Carolina, created Career Life Planning and Applied Career Counseling for teachers and counselors. These courses fill three basic needs:

- They give teachers and counselors an accurate understanding of the requirements of modern business and industry;
- They make curriculum and instruction relevant to the real world;
- They provide appropriate career counseling to all students.

Career Life Planning is taught at a nearby university in the fall, spring, and summer. Teachers earn three semester hours of graduate credit for completing the course. Participants visit 12 business and industry sites to see firsthand the challenging tasks their students will encounter after graduation. They also observe vocational classrooms to gain perspective on how academic and occupational curricula and instruction can be integrated.

Applied Career Counseling, offered through the same university, provides information on "tech prep" programs of study and technology education nationally, as well as business and industry viewpoints on the preparation of career-bound students.

Both courses promote participation, observation, discussion, and networking. As a result, teachers are better prepared to interpret career-bound students' needs and those of their future employers. The instruction helps teachers incorporate those needs into curriculum design, instructional practices, and career counseling. The courses also prompt teachers to overcome attitudes that may have prevented them from linking their classrooms with the workplace.

- **Immediate and Sustained Practice**—If teachers postpone practicing a new technique, they lose some understanding of it. If they are fearful or skeptical about a new procedure, they may not practice. Teachers may need to try a new technique 20 to 30 times before they achieve control and comfort.
- **Peer Communication and Support**—Peer sharing and coaching will boost implementation. One successful strategy is to organize teachers into teams to share plans, discuss experiences, and coach each other. Using modern telecommunications and other methods, teachers need to maintain ongoing contact with teachers and "experts" during implementation of new techniques in the classroom.
- **Ongoing Assessment of Implementation**—The staff development team tracks the use of new procedures and the frequency that teachers meet and plan together. This information will give the team and trainers a realistic picture of their effectiveness and will help them plan workshops tailored to progress and problems. When teachers master new techniques, they should remember to celebrate.
- **Advanced Training**—As teachers become more competent in using new methods, the team will want to offer advanced training, including ways to combine new procedures with those mastered earlier.

Identify Consultants and Trainers

To ensure success, the staff development team selects consultants and trainers carefully and explains clearly what the activity is intended to accomplish. The team asks a number of questions to ensure

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that the person being considered is the right one to help teachers and school leaders move closer to achieving the *HSTW* goals and key practices. Questions will cover instructional approaches, knowledge and experience, training climate, and follow-up and long-term support:

- **Instructional Approach**
  - Can the consultant help teachers implement new strategies that are consistent with the *HSTW* goals and key practices?
  - Can the consultant provide a theoretical basis for new learning?
  - Can the consultant demonstrate new instructional methods during the staff development activity?
- **Knowledge and Experience**
  - How did the consultant learn the topic—by reading, participating in a training session, or through experience?
  - Has the consultant used the strategies with career-bound students?
- **Training Climate**
  - How will the consultant ensure that the training environment promotes learning?
  - How will small groups be used in training sessions—for discussion, practice, feedback, and/or peer support?
- **Follow-through and Long-term Support**
  - Is the consultant experienced in providing long-term, on-the-job support? Can the consultant do classroom demonstrations and provide classroom coaching?
  - Can the consultant suggest activities to increase participants' knowledge and understanding of new methods?

Track Student Achievement and Changes in School Practices

At regular intervals during implementation, staff developers should look for improvement in school practices and student performance. If staff development is aimed at getting more career-bound students to follow a planned and accelerated four-year program of study, developers can compare the percent of students completing such plans with the percent who completed plans in previous years. Depending on the amount of progress, staff developers will want to celebrate and continue their efforts—or adjust the plan and seek additional support.

The design and implementation phase includes regular evaluation, feedback, and correction as needed. Evaluation reveals the effectiveness of staff development activities, the appropriateness of the materials, adjustments needed in the development schedule, and teachers' and students' progress. (See Evaluation on page 15.)

HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK TRAINERS OF OUTSTANDING PRACTICES

The *HSTW* program has initiated a system of Trainers of Outstanding Practices (TOP) to provide sites with the names of qualified trainers who are willing and able to deliver one-day workshops and provide technical assistance on topics related to the *HSTW* key practices. The intent of the system is to give *HSTW* teachers access to new knowledge and skills that they can apply immediately to improve the reading, math, science, and occupational skills of career-bound students. For more information, contact the *High Schools That Work* Staff Development Coordinator at (404) 875-9211.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN SOUTH CAROLINA GIVES TEACHERS FLEXIBILITY TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTION

A staff development initiative in Lexington School District Four in Swansea, South Carolina, is a model program that focuses on improving instruction for all students by:

- Allowing focused professional growth of staff members;
- Promoting collaboration and support between teachers and administrators;
- Improving the quality of instruction in the classroom.

Sandra Sarvis and Franklin Vail of the school district developed the model to give teachers flexibility and autonomy in accomplishing their goals and objectives. The process begins when the principal meets with each teacher to discuss collaborative goals for the year. They use an Instructional Improvement Plan worksheet to record two major goals, two to three supporting objectives for each goal, a list of projected activities, and a time line. Principals and teachers meet with their immediate supervisors at least twice during the year to discuss progress toward the goals.

District-level staff play an active role in promoting instructional improvement:

- The district office publishes a menu of staff development opportunities from which teachers can select training that supports their goals and objectives. This list is based on a survey distributed at the end of the previous year in which teachers are asked to assess their knowledge of more than 20 topics.
- The district requires attendance at some district and school staff development activities to provide teachers and administrators with a common understanding of significant topics.
- The district distributes announcements of staff development opportunities offered in neighboring school systems and by educational associations.
- Teachers may ask district administrators to observe or coach them in the classroom as a type of staff development;
- The district Office of Instruction fills requests from teachers and administrators for articles on professional growth.

Staff development continues throughout the year: Teachers and administrators attend and/or participate in conferences, enroll in graduate courses, and make visits to business and industry. Staff members keep a log of their activities.

After a conference, a principal and teacher complete a one-page sheet that asks for: 1) a summary of the conference; 2) a plan of action for using new knowledge from the conference; and 3) an assessment of how the conference helped the teacher achieve his/her goals and objectives.

Each administrator and staff member keeps a portfolio that demonstrates efforts, progress, and achievements related to professional growth. Everyone's portfolio contains the staff development survey, instructional improvement plan, staff development log, and conference summaries. Other items may also be included, depending on the needs of individual teachers and administrators. These items include student evaluations; student project results; articles written for publication; notes on collaboration with other teachers or administrators; and self-reflective notes or anecdotal records on research, new strategies tried in the classroom, or staff development sessions attended.

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TEACHERS IN DELAWARE VO-TECH SCHOOL DISTRICT GROW PROFESSIONALLY BY WORKING IN TEAMS

The New Castle County Vocational-Technical School District in Delaware organized a committee to explore ways to integrate academic and vocational education at the three technical high schools. After reviewing literature and studying existing programs, the committee developed an integration model with two main parts: teams of teachers working together and curriculum reinforcement.

The first part provides time for academic and vocational teachers to work together on projects aimed at improving career-bound students' reading, writing, math, and science skills. Teams of academic and vocational teachers are invited to submit proposals for projects that can be replicated by other staff members. Small grants are awarded to selected proposals, and teachers who submit those proposals are scheduled for common planning time. They also have an opportunity to attend the professional conference of their choice.

Fifteen of 20 projects were funded the first year. They included:

- **Fast Plants**—a project combining horticulture, biology, and math. Students studied the developmental stages of plants, measured and maintained statistical records, and cared for a variety of fast-growing plants.
- **Trade Journals**—Students produced journals in their chosen fields by using technical writing skills; reading articles and books; gathering information on new products, technical developments, and career opportunities; and interviewing professionals in the field.
- **Career Project Time**—Academic teachers met with students every two weeks to help them prepare for vocational club leadership activities such as speeches, presentations, and demonstrations.

The second part of the integration model is designed to reinforce curriculum: It includes teacher training in developing cross-disciplinary lesson plans, a review of course sequencing, and adoption of competency expectations for each career program.

Institutionalization

Institutionalization is the process of integrating what is learned through staff development into the school routine. Although institutionalization is the intent of staff development, it is often ignored, left to chance, or handled superficially. Workshop leaders cannot wait until the training is under way to consider how to embed new skills into the routine or to garner support from administrators and teachers. Successful institutionalization requires continuous support, encouragement, and recognition.

Questions to Ask During Institutionalization

- Is the change embedded in the structure of the organization through policy (rules, roles, and relationships), budget (staff, materials, and space), and timetable?
- What transitional strategies exist if the principal or other key personnel leave the school?
- What structures are in place to maintain new skills?
- Does the schedule enable colleagues to collaborate?
- Does the budget cover ongoing staff development activities and use of new skills and materials?
- How will new staff be oriented and trained?
- What data will be examined to determine which strategies to discard, continue, or integrate with new strategies and materials?
- How will teachers and administrators share responsibility for maintaining new skills?

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- How are new skills used—in a few classrooms, in all classrooms, or in the entire school?
- Will district-level leaders continue to support the effort and provide appropriate recognition?
- Are teachers and administrators at the school prepared to take responsibility for leading staff development programs?

Evaluation

The intended results of staff development are aimed at students, staff, and the school. Since each activity is tied to the goals and objectives of the school's overall staff development program, evaluation involves collecting information from each type of staff development activity—whether it is a workshop, school visitation, industry tour or internship, classroom observation, research study, or some other activity.

What Are the Intended Results?

Making evaluation decisions on the front end of the staff development process can help the staff development team take the fuzziness out of evaluation. The team will want to answer three questions:

1. **What results do you intend to produce, or what new conditions do you expect to create?** Planning cannot begin until that question is answered.
2. **If the intended results are achieved, will they be consistent with the school's vision, beliefs, values, and commitments?** The *HSTW* vision is the basis for answering this question. Consistency is important in helping teachers realize that they are engaged in a long-term process to improve themselves, their colleagues, and their students.
3. **How will we know if we achieve the intended results, and what will we use to confirm them?** The staff development team should assess results and report findings.

Evaluation Steps

Too often, staff development activities are evaluated according to how individuals feel about the instructor, the environment, and other conditions, rather than intended results. Planners should not ignore those issues, but they should not let them be the sole basis for evaluating an instructor or activity. Instructors who push teachers to learn, practice, and fully implement new methods may not be viewed favorably immediately after the activity. Some comments may be due to participant anxiety. After teachers use new skills and observe their effect on students, they may see the instructor in a different light.

A results-focused evaluation plan for staff development involves eight steps:

1. State the intended results;
2. State the indicators that will show that the desired results have been obtained;
3. Select, design, or adapt instruments and procedures for assessing the intended results;
4. Establish a time line;
5. Gather and record data throughout the implementation phase;
6. Analyze the data;
7. Interpret the findings;
8. Continue the activity or take corrective action.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING STAFF DEVELOPMENT AT *HSTW* SITES

Staff development for the *HSTW* program is a responsibility shared by district-level staff, the school principal, the *HSTW* Site Coordinator, the site staff development team, academic and vocational teachers, and counselors.

District-Level Support

District-level support and leadership are essential in a school's staff development efforts. Schools can make some changes without district-level support, but they cannot continue to change without district action to create conditions for long-term improvement. Board of Education policies—on such topics as school governance and resource allocation for staff development—have a direct bearing on how schools plan and deliver staff development activities.

The superintendent's role is to communicate the importance of staff development by setting high expectations and participating personally in staff development activities. The biggest problem facing many *HSTW* sites is not resistance to change; it is the ill-advised and uncoordinated adoption of too many projects, resulting in incoherence, fragmentation, and overload. The role of the superintendent and district-level staff is to help high schools select and implement the right choices. Effective district-level leaders:

- Help school leaders combine fragmented initiatives into a unified improvement strategy;
- Support and conduct staff development activities that reinforce the *HSTW* key practices;
- Respect the school's desire for autonomy in determining staff development priorities and conducting staff development activities.

The Principal

The principal helps the faculty focus on the vision of *HSTW* and supports a staff development plan that results in full-scale implementation through a challenging curriculum and student-centered instruction. The principal makes the *HSTW* key practices a way of life at the school. Principals at successful sites:

- Demonstrate their commitment to *HSTW* and reinforce that the program is permanent and will be pursued with depth and quality;
- Use school and student data and other evidence to help teachers understand that the majority of career-bound students can learn more challenging content if the school structure and instructional processes underscore higher achievement;
- Make changes in the school day to enable academic and vocational teachers to work, plan, and learn together and share their knowledge with others in the school;
- Encourage and support teachers who "go first" in working as teams and implementing new instructional strategies that will get students to work harder to achieve higher expectations;
- Urge all teachers to use new strategies to help career-bound students achieve at a higher level and meet the expectations of the workplace;
- Link teachers, counselors, and teams of teachers to resources for staff development, curriculum, and instructional approaches;
- Create incentives for participation in staff development activities and for high performance in accelerating the learning of career-bound students;
- Share the school's accomplishments with internal and external audiences.

The Site Staff Development Team

The role of the site staff development team is to organize a quality plan based on the needs of teachers and students. The team determines the needs, organizes an ongoing process that allows for individualized as well as group staff development, and evaluates the effectiveness of the effort.

The *HSTW* Site Coordinator

The *HSTW* Site Coordinator has two major responsibilities in staff development:

- To help design and conduct a plan that meets the needs of academic and vocational teachers, counselors, and administrators in raising the achievement of career-bound students;
- To link school leaders and teachers with staff development opportunities offered by SREB, the state, the district, and others—and to facilitate the sharing of new information with teachers and school leaders who could not attend.

Vocational and Academic Teachers

Vocational and academic teachers are active participants in staff development efforts aimed at replacing passive teaching practices with student-centered, project-based approaches connecting high-level academic content to the real world.

SAMPLE STAFF DEVELOPMENT PLAN #1
FOR *HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK* SITES

PROBLEM: Career-bound students do not demonstrate problem-solving skills needed for higher achievement in academic and occupational classes and in the workplace and postsecondary education.

CONNECTION TO *HSTW* GOALS AND KEY PRACTICES: Career-bound students should develop problem-solving skills by completing challenging projects and assignments that will help prepare them for the modern workplace.

INTENDED RESULTS: Teachers will learn new teaching strategies and use them regularly in the classroom. Students will improve their problem-solving skills through group projects and individual assignments.

DOCUMENTING THE RESULTS: Teachers will observe each other in the classroom during the implementation of new teaching strategies. Lesson plans will be examined for evidence of new strategies. Students will be observed solving difficult problems and completing challenging assignments. Students will develop portfolios of their work to demonstrate problem-solving skills.

TARGET GROUP: Academic and vocational teachers and career-bound students.

CONTENT OF TRAINING: Strategies for increasing students' problem-solving skills; teacher coaching.

WAYS TO ACHIEVE THE INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- ❑ Presentations and readings on theories supporting the strategies;
- ❑ Demonstrations by skilled teachers;
- ❑ Videotapes of the strategies;
- ❑ Practice in small groups;
- ❑ Feedback from other teachers;
- ❑ Small group meetings of teachers to plan lessons requiring students to use problem-solving strategies;
- ❑ Use of the strategies in the classroom;
- ❑ Observation of each other using the strategies;
- ❑ Mutual coaching of teachers implementing the strategies;
- ❑ Continued study and practice in small groups;
- ❑ Continued collaborative practice and refinement of skills;
- ❑ Idea-sharing among teachers.

TIME LINE: The process begins with a summer workshop and continues throughout the school year.

RESOURCES NEEDED: A trainer skilled in the strategies to be developed; publications; audiovisual materials; and time for training, small group meetings, and teacher coaching.

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SAMPLE STAFF DEVELOPMENT PLAN #2
FOR *HIGH SCHOOLS THAT WORK* SITES

PROBLEM: Career-bound students are not achieving at a high level.

CONNECTION TO *HSTW* GOALS AND KEY PRACTICES: The *HSTW* goal is to raise the achievement of career-bound students to the national average of all students.

INTENDED RESULTS: Teachers design and present lesson plans that have high standards. They also plan relevant activities enabling students to apply the content to real life. Extra help and time will be available to assist students in meeting the standards.

DOCUMENTING THE RESULTS: Teachers in the same content area will review the lesson plans; student test results will be examined.

INDICATORS THAT SHOW RESULTS: Lesson plans will contain the items described above; students will score at or above 80 percent on tests that measure content.

TARGET GROUP: All career-bound students.

CONTENT OF TRAINING: Curriculum development.

PROCESS FOR ACHIEVING EACH PHASE OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT: 1) Academic and vocational teachers plan together; 2) Teachers observe and coach each other; 3) Products and strategies are refined and added to the curriculum.

TIME LINE: Lessons are developed; while they are being implemented, a new set of lessons is developed; while the first lessons are institutionalized, the second set is implemented, and development of another set of lessons begins.

RESOURCES NEEDED: Time for academic and vocational teacher planning; peer observation/coaching.

Based on material presented by David J. Pucel at the 1993 *High Schools That Work* Staff Development Conference.

One way to integrate academic and vocational teachers' efforts is to build a structure in which they jointly:

- Address ways to achieve the *HSTW* goals and key practices;
- Learn, plan, test ideas, and reflect together;
- Support each other in making needed changes;
- Pursue changes in school policies and practices over a period of time.

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Postsecondary Institutions and the Private Sector

Postsecondary two-year colleges, universities, and private sector employers have two major roles in staff development:

- To help academic and vocational teachers benchmark the curriculum to the requirements of two-year technical or community colleges and the 21st-century workplace;
- To model engaging instructional approaches for encouraging career-bound students to make the effort to pursue complex learning objectives.

SUMMARY

Effective site-focused staff development can change a *HSTW* site from an institution that turns its back on career-bound students to an institution in which academic and vocational teachers work together to raise career-bound students' achievement and to help them succeed in employment and postsecondary education.

Effective staff development at *HSTW* sites gives teachers:

- Freedom and authority to design an accelerated curriculum for career-bound students;
- Resources, time, and money to develop an integrated curriculum that blends challenging academic and vocational content;
- Support and assistance in moving from a traditional teacher-centered instructional approach to a student-centered one in which students are actively involved in learning.

For more information, contact Gene Bottoms, Director, *High Schools That Work*, Southern Regional Education Board, (404) 875-9211.

The High Schools That Work *program is the nation's largest and fastest growing effort to raise the achievement of career-bound students. Created by the Southern Regional Education Board-State Vocational Education Consortium, the program includes over 300 school and school system sites in 19 states.*

These guidelines are based on the Consortium's experience with High Schools That Work *sites during the first five years of the program. The guidelines are designed to be a framework for positive action at the school site and in the classroom.*

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